have been so successful all these years | that you have grown overconfident. I tell you that there is a desperately shrewd man somewhere back of all this. Mark me, I do not believe Hargreave is dead. He is in hiding. It may be near by. He may have dropped from the balloon before it left land The man they picked up may be Orts. the aeronaut. The five thousand might have been his fee for rescuing Hargreave. Here is the greatest thing we've ever been up against; and you start in with every day methods!"

"Little woman, don't let your tongue run away with you too far."

"I'm not the least bit afraid of you, Leo. You need me, and it has never been more apparent than at this mo-

All right. I fell by the wayside this trip. Truthfully, I realized it five minutes after the men were gone. The only clever thing I did was to keep the mask on my face. They can't come back at me. But the thing looked so easy; and it would have worked but for Norton's appearance."

"You all but compromised me. That butler worries me a little." Her expression lost its anger and grew thoughtful. "He's always about, some where. Do you think Hargreave took him into his confidence?"

"Can't tell. He's been watched straight for 40 hours. He hasn't mailed a letter or telephoned to any place but the grocery. There have been no telegrams. Some one in that house knows where the money is, and it's ten to one that it will be the girl." "She lookes enough like Katrina to

be her ghost." Braine went over to the window and stared up at the stars.

"You have made a good impression on the girl?" with his back still toward her.

"I had her in my arms."

"Olga, my hat is off to you," turning, now that his face was again in repose. "Your very frankness regarding your relationship will pull the wool over their eyes. Of course they'll make inquiries and they'll find out that you haven't lied. It's perfect. Not even that newspaper wessel will see anything wrong. Toward you they will eventually ease up and you can act without their even dreaming your part in the business. We must not be seen in public any more. This butler may know where I stand even though he cannot prove it. Now, I'm going to tell you something. Perhaps you've long since guessed it. Katrina was mine till Hargreave-never mind what his name was then-till Hargreave came into the feld. So sure of her was I that I used her as a lure to bring him to us. She fell in love with him, but too late to warn him. I had the satisfaction of seeing him cast her aside, curse her, and leave her. In one thing she fooled us all. I never knew of the child till you told me." He paused to light a cigarette.

"Hargreave was madly in love with her. He cursed her, but he came back to the house to forgive her, to find that she had been seized by the secret police and entombed in the fortress. I had my revenge. It was I who sent in the information, practically bogus. But in Russia they never question; they act and forget. So he had a daughter!"

He began pacing the floor, his hands behind his back; and the woman watched him, oscillating between love and fear. He came to a halt abruptly and looked down at her.

'Don't worry. You have no rival. I'll leave the daughter to your tender mercies.

"The butler," she said, "has full powers of attorney to act for Hargreave while absent, up to the day the girl becomes of legal age."

"I'll keep an eye on our friend Jones. From now on, day and night, there will be a cat at the knothole, and 'ware mouse! Could you make up anything like this girl?" suddenly.

"A fair likeness." "Do it. Go to the ship which picked up the man at sea and quiz the captain. Either the aviator or Hargreave is alive. It is important to learn which at once. Be very careful; play the game only as you know how to play it. And if Hargreave is alive, we win. Tomorrow morning, early. Tears of anguish, and all that. Sailors are easy when a woman weeps. No color, remember; just the yellow wig and the salient features. Now, by-by!"

"Aren't you going to kiss me, Leo?" He caught her hands. "There is a species of Delilah about you, Olga. A kiss tonight from your lips would snip my locks; and I need a clear head. Whether we fall or win, when this game is played you shall be my wife." He kissed the hands and strode out into the hall.

The woman gazed down at her small white hards and smiled tenderly. (The tigress has her tender moments!) He meant it!

She went into her dressing room and for an hour or more worked over her face and hair, till she was certain that if the captain of the ship described her to anyone else he could not fail to give a fair description of Florence Har-

greave. But Norton reached the captain first. Other reporters had besieged him, but they had succeeded in gathering the varuest kind of information. They had no description of Hargreave, while Norton had. Before going down to the boat, however, he had delved into the past of the Princess Olga Perigoff. It cost him a pocketful of money, but the end justified the means. The princess had no past worth mentioning. By plecing this and that together he became assured that she had told the simple truth regarding the relationship to Florence's mother. A cablegram had given him all the facts in her history; there were no gaps or discrep-

neice. It remi clear and trank, Trust | Busslen secret agent to know what

ie was talking about So Nerton's suspicions-and he had

lulled to sleep. And he wouldn't have doubted her at all except for the fact that Braine had been with her when he had introduced Hargreave. Hargreave had feared Braine; that much the reporter had elicited from the butler. But there wasn't the slightest evidence. Braine had been in New York for nearly six years. The princess had arrived in the city but a year gone. And Braine was a member of several down." fashionable clubs, never touched cards, and seldom drank. He was an expert chess player and a wonderful amateur billiardist. Perhaps Jones, the taciturn and inscrutable, had not told him all he knew regarding his master's past.

in the story when it was complete. But what a story it was going to be when he cleared it up! The more mystifying it was, the greater the zest and sport for him. Norton was like a

Well, well; he had in his time un-

tangled worse snarls. The office had

turned him loose, a free lance, to

handle the case as he saw fit, to turn



"I Am Not Afraid of You, Leo."

gambler who played for big stakes, and only big stakes stirred his crav-

The captain of the tramp steamer Orient told him the same tale he had told the other reporters; he had picked up a man at sea. The man had been brought aboard totally exhausted.

"Was there another body any

"No."

"What became of him?"

"I sent a wireless and that seemed to bother him. It looked so that he did not want anybody to learn that he had been rescued. The moment the boat touched the pier he lost himself in the crowd. Fifty reporters came aboard, but he was gone. And I could but tell them just what I'm telling you."

"He had money." "About five thousand."

"Please describe him."

The captain did so. It was the same description he had given to all the reporters. Norton looked over the rall at the big warehouse.

"Was it an ordinary balloon?"

"There you've got me. My Marconi man says the balloon part was like any other balloon; but the passenger car was a new business to him. It could be driven against the wind." "Driven against the wind. Did you

tell this to the other chaps?" "Don't think I did. Just remem bered it. Probably some new invention; and now it's at the bottom of the sea. Two men, as I understand it, went off in this contraption. One is

gone for good." "For good," echoed the reporter gravely. Gone for good, indeed, poor devil! Norten took out a roll of bills.

There's two hundred in this roll." "Well" eald the captain, vastly as-

tonished. "It's yours if you will do me a

small favor," "If it doesn't get me mixed up with

the police. I'm only captain of a tramp; and some of the harbor police have taken a dislike to me. What do you want me to do?" "The police will not bother you, This

man Hargreave had some enemies; they want either his life or his money; maybe both. It is a peculiar case, with Russia in the background. He might enemies are." have laid the whole husiness before the police, but he chose to fight it out to await the call from Grannis. He himself. And to tell the truth, I don't, was sorry, but if Jones would not take believe the police would have done any good."

"Peare her over; what do you want me to do for that handsome roll of he could readily understand Jones' money?

"If any man or woman who is not a reporter comes to pump you tell them the man went ashore with a packet under his arm."

"Tie a knot in that." "Say that the man was gray baired, clean shaven, straight, with a scar high up on his for themal, generally cov-

ered up by his hor. That's battened down, my lad. Go

"Say that you saw him enter youder

his packet."

"Easy as dropping my mudhook." "That's all." Norton gave the captain the money. "Good-by and many entertained some-were completely thanks."

"Don't mention it." Norton left the slip and proceeded to

the office of the warehouse. He approached the manager's desk. "Hello, Grannis, old top!" The man looked up from his work

surlily. Then his face brightened. "Norton? What's brought you here? O, yes; that balloon business.

"What kind of a man is the captain of that old hooker in the slip?"

"Shifty in gun running, but other wise as square as a die. Looks funny to see an old tub like that fixed up with wireless; but that has saved his neck a dozen times when he was running it into a noose. Not going to interview me, are you?"

"No. I'm going to ask you to do me a littie favor."

"They always say that. But spin her out. If it doesn't cost me my job, it's yours."

"Well, there will be a person making inquiries about the mysterious aeronaut. All I want you to say is. that he left a packet with you, that you've put it in that safe till he calls to claim it."

Grannis nibbled the end of his pen Suppose some one should come and demand that I open the safe and de

"All you've got to do is to tell them to show the receipt signed by you." The warehouse manager laughed. "Got a lot of sense in that ivory dome of yours. All right. But if anything happens you've got to come around and back me up. What's it about?"

"That I dare not tell you. This much, I'm laying a trap and I want some one I don't know to fall into it." "On your way, James. But if you don't send me some prize fight tickets next week for this, I'll never do you

another favor." In reply Norton took from his pocket two bits of pasteboard and laid them on the desk. "I knew you'd be wanting something like this,"

"Ringside!" cried Grannis. "You re porters are lucky devils!"

"I'd go myself if there was any earthly chance of a real scrap. You make me laugh, Gran. You're always going, always hoping the next one will be a real one. But it's all bunk. The pugs are the biggest fakers on top the sod. They've got us newspaper men done to a frazzle."

"I guess you're right. Well, count on me regarding that mysterious bundle in the safe."

"At three o'clock this afternoon I want you to call me up. If no one has called, why the game is up. But if some one does come around and make inquiries, don't fail to let me know."

"I'll be here till five. I'd better call you up then."

Then Norton returned home and idled about till afternoon. He went over to Riverdale. Five times he walked up and down the front of the Hargreave place, finally plucked up his courage and walked to the door. After all, he was a lucky mortal. He had a good excuse to visit this house every day in the week. And there was something tantalizing in the risk he took. Besides, he wanted to prove to himself whether it was a passing fancy or something deeper. That's the way with humans; we never see a sign "Fresh Paint" that we don't have to prove it.

He chatted with Florence for a while and found that, for all she might be guileless to the world, she was a good linguist, a fine musician, and talked with remarkable keenness about books and arts. But unless he roused her, the eadness of her position always lay written in her face. It was not difficult for him to conjure up her dreams in coming to the city and the blow which, like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky, had shattered them ruthlessly.

"You must come every day and tell me how you have progressed," she said.

"I'll obey that order gladly, whenever I can possibly do it. My visits will always be short," "That is not necessary."

"No," said Norton in his heart, "but

it is wise." Always he found Jones waiting for him at the door, always in the shadow. "Well?" the butler whispered.

"I have laid a neat trap. Whether this balloon was the one that left the top of this house I don't know. But if there were two men in it, one of them lies at the bottom of the sea."

"And the man found?" The butler's voice was tense.

"It was not Hargreave. I met Orts but once, and as he wore a beard then the captain's description did not tally with your recollection."

"Thank God! But what is this trap?" "I propose to find out by it who is back of all this, who Hargreave's real

Norton returned to his rooms, there him into his fullest confidence, ha must hold himself to blame for any blunder he (Norton) made. Of course, angle of vision. He knew nothing of the general run of reporters; he had heard of them by rumor and distrusted them. He was not aware of the fact that the average reporter carries more secrets in his head than a prime minsater, it was, then, up to him to set about to allay this distrust and gain the man's complete confidence.

Meanwhile that same morning a pretty young woman boarded the how to account for the flickering light Orient and asked to be led to the captain. Her eyes were red; she had His ancient enemy nad been watch-

captain, susceptible like all sailors. Hargreave and the meddling reporter taurant, and dropped into one of his saw her his promises to Norton took wings.

"This is Captain Hagan?" she asked, balling the handkerchief she held in her hand.

"Yes, miss. What can I do for you?" He put his hands embarrassedly into his pockets-and felt the crisp bills. But for that magic touch he would have forgottenthis lines. He squared his shoulders.

"I have every assurance that the man you pickedtup at sea isemy father. I am Florence Hargreave. Tell me everything."

The captain's very blundering deceived her. "And then he hustled down the gang-plank and headed for

that warehouse. He had a package which he was as tender of as if it had been dynamite." "Thank you!" impulsively.

"A man has to do his duty, miss. A sailor's always glad to rescue a man at sea," awkwardly.

When she finally went down the gangplank the sigh the captain heaved was almost as loud as the exhaust from the donkey engines which were working out the crates of lemons from the hold.

"Maybe she is his daughter; but two hundred is two hundred, and I'm a poor sallor man."

Then Grannis came in for his troubles. What was a chap to do

"I am sorry, miss, but I can't give you that package. I gave the man a receipt and till it is presented to me the Knickerbocker cafe-restaurant. the package must remain in yonder safe. You understand enough about the business to realize that. I did not solicit the job. It was thrust upon me. I'd give a hundred dollars if the blame thing was out of my safe. You say it is your fortune. That hasn't been proved. It may be gunpowder, dynamite. I'm sorry, but you will have to find your father and bring the receipt."

The young woman left the warehouse, dabbing her eyes with the sodden handkerchief.

"I wonder," mused Grannis, as he watched her from the window, "I wonder what the deuce that chap Nor, fast. I should think the hours you ton is up to. The girl might have lead would kill you off. Anything been the man's daughter. . . . Good Lord, what an ass I am! There wasn't any man!" And so he reached over for the telephone.

Immediately upon receipt of the message the reporter set his machinery in motion. Some time before dawn he would know who the archconspirator was. He questioned Grannis thoroughly, and Grannis' description tallied amazingly with that of Florence Hargreave. But a call over the wire proved to him conclusively that Florence had not been out of the house that morning.

On the morrow the newspapers had that the police had been tipped be- valuable. There was." forehand and were on the grounds in "What was it? The rep time to gather in several notorious gunmen, who, under pressure of the third degree, vowed that they had been hired and paid by a man in a mask and had not the slightest idea what he wanted them to raid. Nothing further could be gotten out of the gunmen. That they were lying the police had no doubt, but they were up against a stout wall and all

Me How You Have Progressed."

they could do was to hold the men for

Norton was in a fine temper. After

all his careful planning he had gained

nothing - absolutely nothing. But

wait; he had gained something-the

bitter enmity of a cunning and des-

perate man, who had been forced to

remain hidden under the pier till al-

CHAPTER IV.

The Flat on the Top Floor.

able hiding place. His clothes were

soiled and damp, his hat gone. By

a hair's breadth he had escaped the

clever trap laid for him. Hargreave

was alive, he had escaped; Braine was

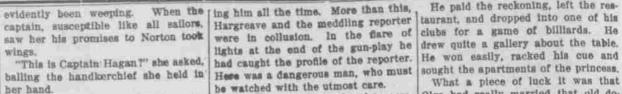
as certain of this fact as he was of

in the upper story of the warehouse.

Braine crawled from his uncomfort-

the grand jury.

most dawn.



He, Braine, had been lured to comgalling disappointment.

He crawled along the top of the pier, listening, sending his dark-accustomed glance hither and thither. The sky in the east was growing paler and lice in waiting. The question is, has paler. In and out among the bales he fooled us? Did he take that milof wool, bags of coffee and lemon lion or did he hide it? There is one crates he slowly and cautiously thing left-to get that girl. No matwormed his way. A watchman patrolled the office side of the warehouse, and Braine found it possible to creep around the other way, thence into the street. After that he straightened up, sought a second-hand shop and purchased a soft hat, which he pulled down over his eyes.

He had half a dozen roome which he always kept in readiness for such adventures as this. He rented them furnished in small hotels which never asked questions of their patrons. To one of these he went as fast as his weary legs could carry him. He always carried the key. Once in his room he donned fresh wearing apparel, linen, shoes, and shaved. Then he proceeded downstairs, the secondwhen a pretty girl appealed to him? hand hat shading his eyes and the upper part of his face,

At half past twelve Norton entered and the first person he noticed was Braine, reading the morning's paper, propped up against the water carafe. Evidently he had just ordered, for there was nothing on his plate. Norton walked over and laid his hand upon Braine's shoulder. The man looked up with mild curiosity.

"Why, Norton, sit down, sit down! Have you had lunch? No? Join me.' "Thanks. Came in for my break

fast," said Norton, drawing out the chair. Braine was sitting with his back to the wall on the lounge-seat. "I wonder if you newspaper men ever eat a real, true enough break

new on the Hargreave story?" "I'm not handling that," the reporter lied cheerfully. "Didn't want to. I knew him rather intimately. I've a horror of dead people, and don't want to be called upon to identify the body

when they find it." "Then you think they will find it?" "I don't know. It's a strange mixup. I'm not on the story, mind you; but I was in the locality of Duffy's warehouse late last night and fell into a

gunman rumpus." "Yes, I read about that.

were they after?" "You've got me there. No one scare-heads about an attempt to rob seems to know. Some cock and bull the Duffy warehouse. It appeared story about there being something

paper does not say." "Ten thousand bags of coffee."

Braine lay back in his chair and laughed. "If you want my opinion," said

out to shoot up another gang, and the police got wind of it," "Don't you think it about time the

matter?" "Oh, so long as they pot each other the police look the other way. It saves a long trial and passage up the river. Besides, whenever they are greave isn't over forty-five." nabbed some big politician manages to open the door for them. Great is the American voter."

"Take Mr. Norton's order, Luigi,"

said Braine. "A German pancake, buttered toast and coffee," ordered the reporter.

"Man, eat something!" "It's enough for me." "And you'll go all the rest of the day on tobacco. I know something of

you chaps. I don't see how you manage to do it." "Food is the least of our troubles. By the way, may I ask you a few questions? Nothing for print, unless you've got a new book coming."

"Fire away." "What do you know about the

Princess Perigoff?" "Let me see. H'm. Met her first about a year ago at a reception given to Nasimova. A very attractive woman. I see quite a lot of her. Why?" "Well, she claims to be a sort of

aunt to Hargreave's daughter." "She said something to me about that the other night. You never know where you're at in this world, do

you?" The German pancake, the toast, the coffee disappeared, and the reporter "You Must Come Every Day and Tell

passed his cigars. "The president visits town today and I'm off to watch the show. I supprest, that is, if the girl came from pose I'll have to interview him about the tariff and all that rot. When you mother-strong willed and adventustart on a new book let me know and rous. I'll be your press agent."

"That's a bargain." "Thanks for the breakfast,"

Braine picked up his newspaper, smoked and read. He smoked, yes, but he only pretended to read. The young fool was clever, but no man is infallible. He had not the least suspicion; he saw only the newspaper story. Still, in some manner he might stumble upon the truth, and it would be just as well to tie the at the door. By and by the door reporter's hands effectually,

The rancor of early morning had been subdued; anger and quick temper never paid in the long run, and no one appreciated this fact better than his own breathing. He now knew Braine. To put Norton out of the way temporarily was only a wise preog renrical.

He paid the reckoning, left the res-

What a piece of luck it was that Olga had really married that old domit an overt act, and by the rarest tard, Perigoff! He had left her a good luck had escaped with nothing titled widow six months after her marmore serious than a cold chill and a riage. But she had had hardly a kopeck to call her own.

"Olga, Hargreave is alive. He was there last night. But somehow he anticipated the raid and had the poter where Hargreave is hidden, the knowledge that she is in my hands will bring him out into the open."

"No more blind alleys."

"What's on your mind?" "She has never seen her father. She confessed to me that she has not even seen a photograph of him."

There was a long pause. "Do you understand me?" she asked. "By the Lord Harry, I do! You've a head on you worth two of mine. The very simplicity of the idea will



Attempt to Rob the Duffy Warehouse.

win out for us. Some one to pose as her father; a message handed to her in secret; dire misfortune if she whispers a word to anyone; that her father's life hangs upon the secrecy; she must confide in no one, least of all Jones, the butler. It all depends upon how the letter gets to her. Bred in the country, she probably sleeps with her window open. A pebble attached to a note, tossed into the window. I'll trust this to no one; I'll do it myself. With the girl in our control the rest will be easy. If she really does not know where the money is Hargreave will tell us. Great head, little woman, great head. She does not know her father's handwriting?"

"She has never seen a scrap of it. All that Miss Farlow ever received was money. The original note left on the doorstep with Florence has been Norton, "I believe the gunmen were lost. Trust me to make all these inquiries."

"Tomorrow night, then, immediately after dinner, a taxicab will police called a halt in this gunman await her just around the corner. Grange is the best man I can think of. He's an artist when it comes to playing the old-man parts."

> "Another good point. I'm going to stretch out here on the divan and snooze for a while. Had a devil of a

"Not too old, remember, Har-

time last night." *When shall I wake you?" "At six. We'll have an early dinner sent in. I want to keep out of every-

body's way. By-by!" In less than three minutes he was sound asleep. The woman gazed down at him in wonder and envy, If only she could drop to sleep like that. Very softly she pressed her lips to his hair.

At eleven o'clock the following night the hall light in the Hargreave house was turned off and the whole interior became dark. A shadow crept through the Hlac bushes without any more sound that a cat would have made. Florence's window was open, as the arch-conspirator had expected it would be. With a small string and stone as a sling he sent the letter whirling skillfully through the air. It sailed into the girl's room. The man below heard no sound of the stone hitting anything and concluded

that it had struck the bed. He waited patiently. Presently a wavering light could be distinguished over the sill of the window. The girl was awake and had lit the candle. This knowledge was sufficient for his need. The tragic letter would do the the same pattern as her father and

He tiptoed back to the lilacs, when

a noise sent him close to the ground. Half a dozen feet away he saw a shadow creeping along toward the front door. Presently the shadow stood up as if listening. He stooped again and ran lightly to the steps, up these to the door, which he hugged. Who was this? wondered Braine. Patiently he waited, arranging his posture so that he could keep a lookout opened cautiously. A man holding a candle appeared. Braine vaguely recognized Olga's description of the

butler. The man on the veranda suddenly blew out the light. Braine could hear the low murmur of voices, but nothing more. The concaution; it was not a matter of spite versation lasted scarcely a minute. The door closed and the man ran